

MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

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*The only UK magazine dedicated to
Vintage coin-operated amusement machines*

Mechanical Memories Magazine

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Published by: Antique Automatic Amusements
Editor: Jerry Chattenton

10 Bedford Road
Dartford DA1 1SR
☎07710 285360
e-mail jerry.mmm@tiscali.co.uk
www.mechanicalmemoriesmagazine.co.uk

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Editorial

Hello again, and welcome to the October magazine, which if all goes to plan should be thumping onto your doormats about mid month – which by my standards, is pretty good! Entry forms for the November auction are included, so if you intend entering lots, please return your form as quickly as possible. The closing date for entries is Monday 4th November, which should give you about three weeks – but please, please, don't leave it until the last day of the third week! Anyway, more about the auction on the centre pages.

Now, some really good news. As you all know, the campaign to reinstate Margate's Dreamland as a heritage amusement park has regrettably become something of a saga. It is now nearly four years since I asked Nick to write a regular report for this magazine – I'm sure neither of us back then had any idea that the legal situation would drag on the way it has. However, as you will see in Nick's report on the following pages, the land owners have lost their latest appeal and (from what I can make out) have conceded defeat. Dreamland can at last rise from the ashes! I'm sure we can look forward to some really positive news from Nick in the coming months.

Well, that's just about it for now. Get those entry forms back to me ASAP.

Until next time,

all the best

Jerry

Front Cover Picture: Oliver Whales Victory Ball allwin at Clive Baker's arcade at Milestones, Basingstoke. This is one of many pictures supplied to me by Richard for his article published last month. There was insufficient space for most of the pictures, but I have now posted them all in the MMM forum on the pennymachines site.

www.pennymachines.co.uk

Dreamland

MARGATE

Save Dreamland Update October 2013

COURT OF APPEAL BACKS THE DREAMLAND TRUST AND THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL

The owners' latest appeal was heard at the Court of Appeal on 25th and 26th September. We are pleased to announce that the Court of Appeal has dismissed the former owners' appeal against the High Court decision to uphold the confirmation of the council's Compulsory Purchase Order.

PROJECT UP-DATE

On the 3rd September the Dreamland site passed into the ownership of Thanet District Council – a significant moment in Margate's history as Dreamland becomes the Peoples' Park once again.

Community Pay Back young offenders were engaged to help clear the Dreamland car park for re-opening and an eight-week survey programme is about to begin.

The design team were able to visit the site this month for the first time since their appointment. Once the survey reports have been completed and the cost plan reviewed, the project team will be able to finalise the plans and designs for lock down and sign off.

Once the appeal decision has been released we will be opening the gates to Dreamland and inviting all to join us in marking this milestone event – details will be released at a later date.

MISLEADING MEDIA MESSES UP MESSAGES

The week of the appeal whipped up a real media frenzy. In this instance some of the reporting was both misleading and unbalanced and so we must publicly put the record straight!

BBC SE Inside Out programme broadcast on the 25th September misled viewers into believing that the £10m grant money secured for Dreamland, including Sea Change and Heritage Lottery Funding, was to be used to purchase the Dreamland site – this, of course, is not the case.

All secured grants are ringfenced for restoring the Grade II* listed Scenic Railway, Grade II listed menagerie cages, front entrance to the park and bringing back into use the internal café, event and retail spaces under the cinema building, ride restoration, design, branding, content, landscaping, learning and training.

Site purchase costs are a separate matter and currently being negotiated between Thanet District Council and MTCRC.

I'm so glad we've cleared that up – moving on!....

BLACKPOOL MEETINGS

In September The Dreamland Trust had a series of meetings in Blackpool. This was an opportunity to introduce Dreamland designers, HemingwayDesign, to the Thompson family who own and operate Blackpool Pleasure Beach, the park's Head Engineer, Steve Hughes and David Cam, Company Secretary and Director.

We also met with the Head of Blackpool Illuminations, Richard Ryan, who took us on a tour of the illuminations depot at Lightworks.

And last week we played host, in Margate, to the Hastings Pier Trust. We look forward to seeing the pier being restored over the next 18 months or so.

HISTORIC RIDES COLLECTION IS GROWING!

We have now surveyed the rides collection on site and can confirm that key rides planned for Phase One are intact and have not been scrapped as initially feared, although parts of some of the rides earmarked for up cycling have gone.

In addition to the remaining rides, we are in the process of acquiring ten historic thrill rides plus two original, iconic rides returning to Dreamland for the opening line up! New additions include:

Austin Car Ride

This is one of the most popular juvenile rides where young children can 'drive' a car on their own. In 1948 parliament passed an act acknowledging pneumoconiosis in Welsh miners rendering them unable to work in the mines. Chairman of Austin Motors, Leonard Lord, created an employment opportunity for disabled miners to work by building a factory to produce children's pedal cars in the Austin style – the Austin J40. Showmen came up with the idea of fixing the cars onto roundabouts making the J40 accessible to many children.

Muffin the Mule

This ride was built around 1949 by R J Lakin & Company of Streatham for S & J Thurston and decorated by chief artist, Edwin Hall. Originally this ride had streamlined cars in which children could ride, but in the 1950s the popularity of a certain children's television puppet saw the cars changed to Muffin the Mules.

Double Decker Rocket Ride

An unusual children's ride which in addition to the conventional platform mounted toys at ground level, also features an upper deck of Rocket cars adding double the fun! The idea was patented by north-eastern showman, James A Crow, in the late 1940s, and the rides were built under licence by Orton & Spooner of Burton on Trent.

Hurricane Jets

The delight of this 1950s ride is that the rider can control the elevation of the cars by the operation of a joystick. Built by the Langwheels Company of Middlesex, these popular rides could be found in many amusement parks, including Dreamland, although the one we have acquired has spent its life on the travelling fairs.

The Historic Rides Collection is held in safe, off-site storage. The opening rides line-up will be supported by visiting and guest vintage rides and attractions.

OPENING DREAMLAND

In November, we are planning to open the gates to the park to invite people in to see the site for the first time since it closed to the public – a unique photo opportunity and a memorable experience to be shared.

And following the opening of the park we are inviting all our wonderful volunteers, supporters and partners to join us for The Big Clear – we're rolling up our sleeves and pulling up the weeds – can't wait to get going!

We'll confirm dates and details of both the Key to the Gate and The Big Clear days shortly.

Nick Laister

Nick Laister (Chairman, The Dreamland Trust)

Jan Leandro (Heritage and Engagement Officer, The Dreamland Trust)

www.dreamlandmargate.com

www.savedreamland.co.uk

Creating my own Nemesis

by John Wardley

The autobiography of the man who brought the theme park concept to Britain, and created some of the world's most thrilling rides and attractions.

He talks about his early beginnings in the theatre, circus and magical cabaret, his time working on some of the most incredible special effects in the James Bond films (including the famous bus crash scene in Live and Let Die), and how he became associated with Madame Tussauds, the world's most famous wax museum. This led to the development of Chessington World of Adventures, then Alton Towers.

The book also tells of John's early association with John Collins at Barry Island Pleasure Park in South Wales, who was looking for props for his Ghost Train. The young Wardley ended up transforming the ride into Uncle Frankenstein's Scream Machine, and supplying latex props to other amusement operators.

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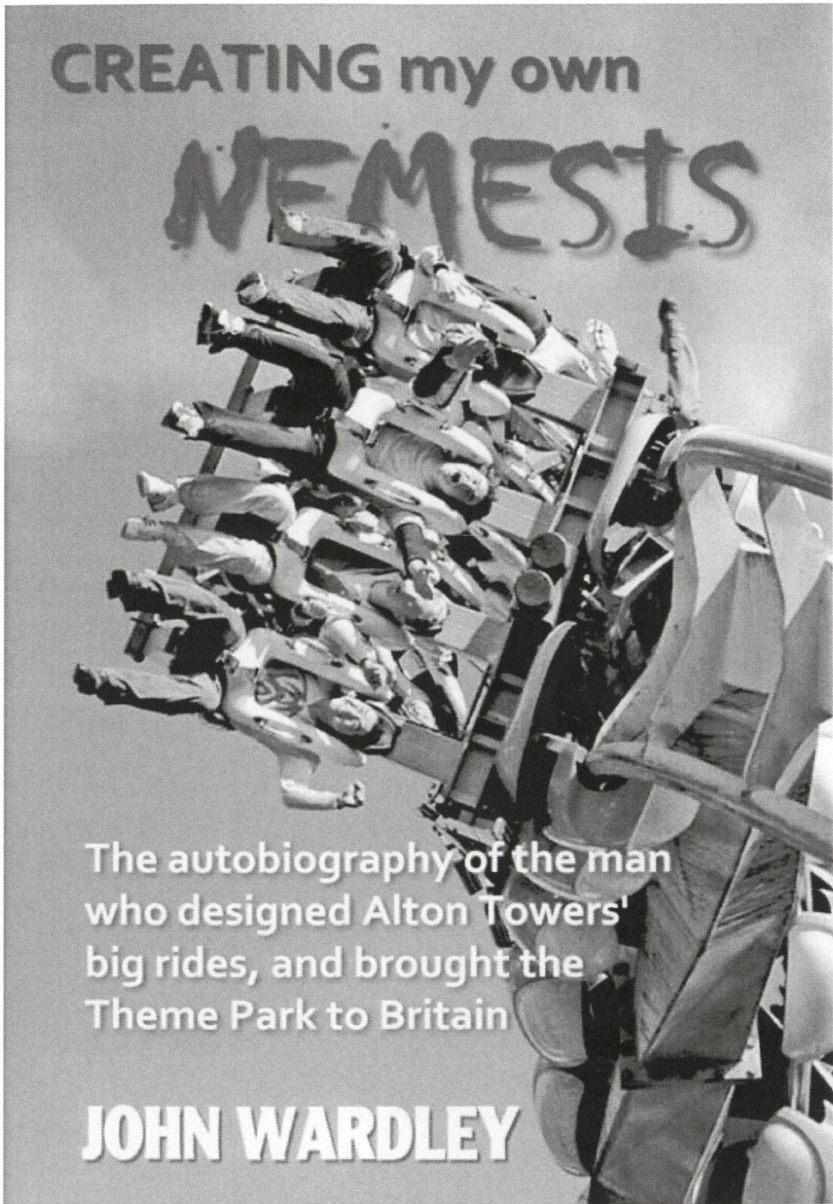
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CREATING my own

NEMESIS

The autobiography of the man
who designed Alton Towers'
big rides, and brought the
Theme Park to Britain

JOHN WARDLEY

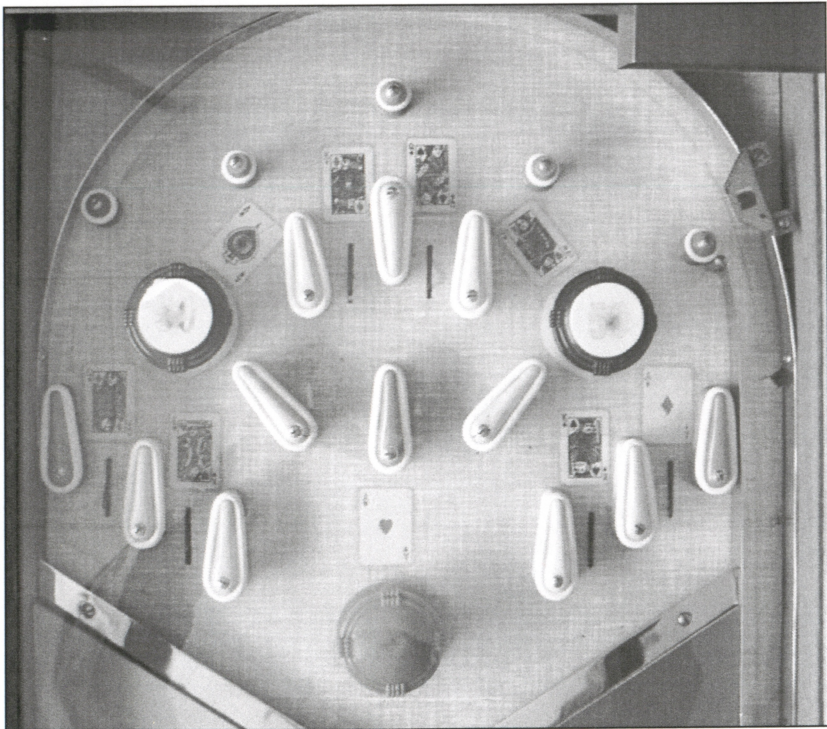


Threes Pinball Machine

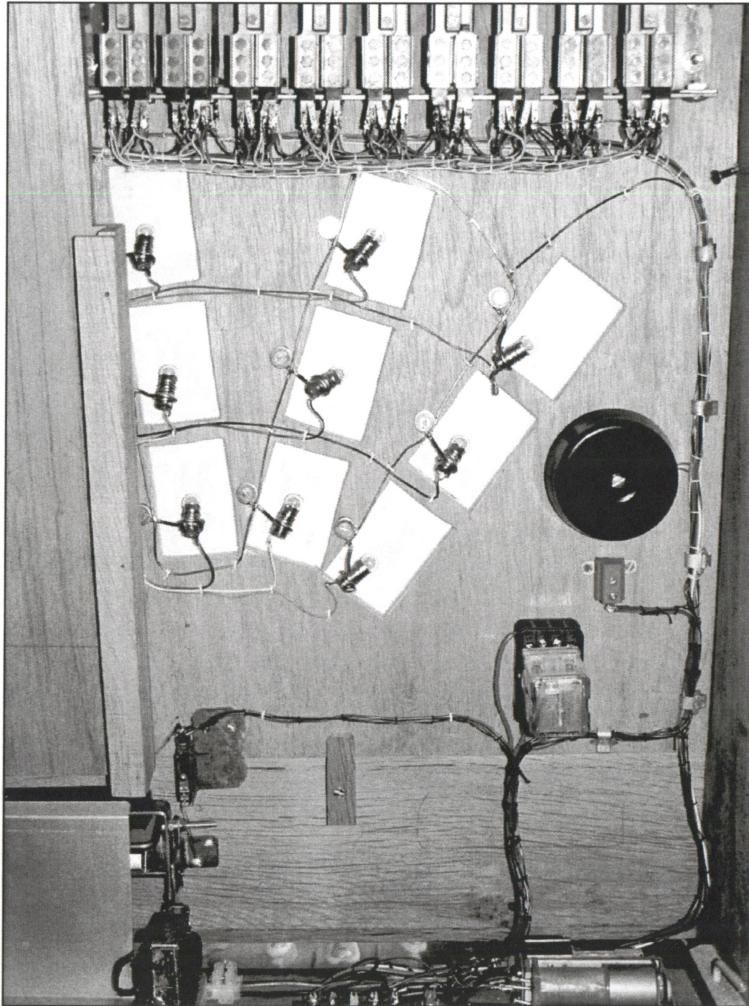
By Stuart Dale

This month I thought I would share with you the story of my latest pinball machine, it is the third machine that I own of this type and style, and by coincidence it is called **Threes**. I feel sure that most of you will have seen the **Tuck Shop** pinball made by Shields of Bridlington, and also the similar **Shoot** pinball made by Jamieson's, also of Bridlington. Both have been featured in earlier issues of this magazine.

I am not 100% sure who made the Threes machine, as it has no makers name on it, but my money is on it being a Jamieson machine. However, Ian Jamieson says he can't remember it, but he says he was only about 9 years old when it was produced and he may have forgotten about it.



The Threes machine pays out a packet of Polos as a reward, there is also bell that rings to signal a payout when you manage to get a winning combination of playing card symbols on the head box display. Although the machine only has one ball bearing, a very clever mechanical star shaped wheel lets you fire the ball three times for one old penny, so you have even more chances of getting a winning combination.



*Internal view of the head box,
showing at the top nine relays associated with each of the nine card symbols.*

As you can see from the photo, the playfield has three bumpers and six rollover switch lanes, each one is marked up with the picture of a playing card. There are 3 Aces, 3 Kings & 3 Queens, and when the ball makes contact with a bumper or a rollover switch that card is then lit on the head box display. If you can get the ball to hit a bumper and rollover switch it is possible to light two cards with one ball increasing your chances of a win. The wining combinations are as follows:

- Three Aces.
- Three Kings.
- Three Queens.

OR

- Ace, King, Queen of Spades.
- Ace, King, Queen of Hearts.
- Ace, King, Queen of Diamonds.

All the above will payout a packet of Polo's. It sounds easy! But the playfield layout has been very well thought out and it can be quite difficult to end with a winning combination. That said, it is a very addictive game to play and would have been a good earner for the arcades.

When I first got this machine about two years ago it was in a very sad state and was missing the head box. Luckily, a couple of years ago I had worked on a similar machine called Bingo on which the electrical circuit was just the same. So once I had managed to track down all the various relays and other electrical *magic bits* that I required, I was able to set to and make a new head box. I constructed a new head cabinet from 7/8" thick oak planks to match the playfield cabinet. I was able to get the correct measurements and details for the new head box from one of my other machines.

The one thing I was short of and had never seen was the back flash for the head of the machine. Luckily, my good friend Robert Rowland came to the rescue by sending me a copy of an old photo of a Threes machine. From this I was able to reproduce the artwork using PhotoShop, and once I was happy with the finished artwork, yet another good friend of mine Jim Witherspoon was able to print out a full size copy for me. It's always good to have friends!

I have tried to recreate the wiring in the head of the machine with vintage parts wherever possible using the same methods that they would have used back in the day. I'm not sure what 'Health & Safety' would have to say about it, but it is a nice machine; it looks and it works just fine and I am very glad to have it in my collection. Needless to say, the Grandchildren love to play it and I have to buy packets of Polos by the cart load.

Stuart Dale

Coventry '13

So, yet another year has passed and we're fast approaching the one day in the year that we all look forward to! It only happens once a year; the biggest vintage coin-op event in the UK, and we believe, the biggest event of its type in Europe. For those of you who will be visiting for the first time, the event is presented by myself and fellow collector Jeremy Clapham – and as we always say, it is an event organised by collectors, for collectors. Once again, we'll be at the Coundon Social Club, just outside central Coventry.

Entry forms are included with the magazine this month, so please, please get them in before the closing date of Monday 4th November. I know I say this every year, but it really is important to get the forms in on time, as there is a lot of work involved in getting the catalogue ready. Do try to include photographs if at all possible (which can be emailed separately if you wish), as in addition to including as many as possible in the printed catalogue, all pictures will be posted on the magazine website. Please try to take some care when taking photographs; in particular, try to avoid taking pictures from weird angles or in bad light – good pictures can make all the difference.

And once again, a word about reserves – if you intend setting a reserve on any of your lots, PLEASE give it some thought and ensure that it is the absolute lowest at which you are prepared to sell. It is always disruptive having to change reserves on the day of sale because vendors have 'changed their minds'!

Catalogues will hopefully be ready a couple of weeks before the auction, but do please order now (and I say this every year too)! The whole point in offering subscribers the reduced rate of £4 is so that I can include your catalogue with the next magazine, thus saving on postage. If you prefer to pay online, please wait until they are available on the website (but you'll pay the full £5). As usual, each catalogue will admit one person on the day. If you're bringing a friend or your wife, they can pay a £3 entrance fee at the door. Just a reminder that charging admission helps us to keep the commission rates at a ludicrous 6%!

*So, fill in those entry forms,
order your catalogue,
And lets all look forward to another great day!*

Mechanical Memories Magazine
Vintage Amusements
Auction

Coundon social club, Coventry 24th November 2013

*** * * * ***

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A Reunion

By Robert Rowland

I for one was so glad for the Central England Vintage Amusements Summer Auction in June, as it gave me a chance to meet up with an old friend's son. His name is **Rondo**, and he is the son of **La Ronde**. I last saw La Ronde here in Mablethorpe in Marine Pastimes amusement arcade c. 1965. To this day I remember so clearly our first meeting, even though it was so long ago. By the way, in case you haven't already guessed, Rondo is not a person, he's an electro-mechanical wall machine made by Jamieson Automatics.

I first encountered his father, La Ronde, from a distance, which I would describe as a really eye-catching slot machine. The main attraction was a very colourful wheel with a two-pointed arrow rotating in a clockwise direction. The nearer I got to this machine, the more the colours stood out. I then read the instructions: *Insert coin, press button to stop arrow, any numbered arrow wins*. There were seven sections where the arrow could stop, from left to right: 3d, lose, 6d, lose, 9d, lose, 3d. The arrow wasn't turning that fast, so I thought to myself "this looks pretty easy to win." I then inserted a penny into the slot and very carefully watched the arrow as it approached the 9d win. I then pressed the stop button, but the arrow continued and just slid off the 9d and onto the next position, which was lose. I was furious! I knew I had pressed the stop button to perfection for the jackpot win, and I really felt that I had been cheated. Even though I loved those colours of La Ronde, I never played on that machine ever again.

But the sheer beauty and good looks of that machine lived on. Now years later, imagine my excitement when I saw in the Summer 2013 Coventry Auction catalogue lot number 99, a *Jamiesons Rondo wall machine with twin jackpot, in good working order, on old penny play with key*. Upon arriving at the auction and viewing the machine, Rondo seemed to have a larger cabinet than my memory of La Ronde. Upon closer inspection I noticed that Rondo displayed a nine position section, which went 3d, lose, 6d, lose, 1/-, lose, 3d, lose, 6d, and just like his dad, Rondo was a cracker. What a treat to meet up with him.

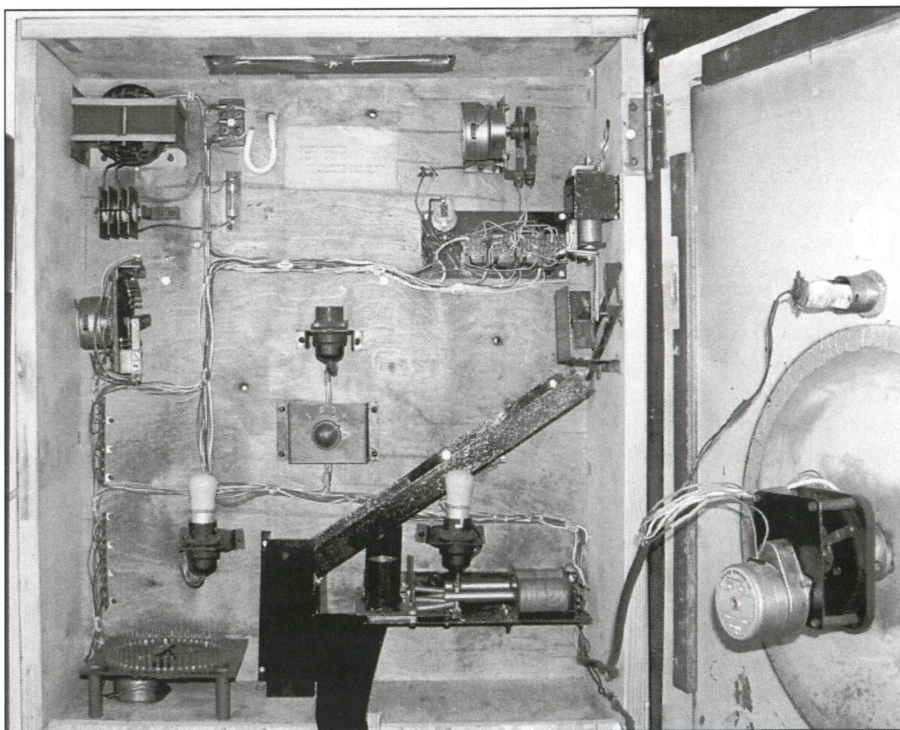
As each lot was sold, my heart started to beat that bit faster. Then he was offered, "Lot 99, Jamiesons Rondo, interesting lot." I was all geared up to battle so hard to get this fella, I knew others would also want him. Luckily for me, the opposition showed very little resistance and was soon defeated, Rondo was all mine. I had waited so long to even see one of these machines, and now I actually owned one!

Opposite page, Robert's Jamiesons Automatics Rondo c. 1968, Lot 99 at the June Coventry Auction this year, and (inset) the earlier La Ronde, c. 1964.

On returning home, I switched the machine on and the colourful round disc of red, blue and green started to revolve in a clockwise direction. The orange and white arrow in the centre blends in nicely, and when lit up, Rondo looked stunning.

The game play is identical to La Ronde – stop the arrow on any number to win, but there is also an added extra to this machine. There is an orange coloured lamp situated just below the marked 1/- win (which flashes on and off). If the arrow is successfully stopped on this middle position you win a shilling (twelve coins), but if the orange lamp stays lit, the machine pays out a special prize token instead of the twelve coins. Back in the days when Rondo was operated in the arcades, this token would have been valued at around five shillings, and could be exchanged at the change desk for a prize, a selection of which would be on display.

Looking inside my Rondo, the first thing I noticed was a 56 pin set selector unit, which revolves around the pins very slowly. In fact, it takes a full two minutes for the selector to complete a full cycle. This is very unusual for a Jamiesons 1960s electro-



Internal view of Rondo, showing the 56 pin set selector bottom left.

mechanical wall machine (it's normally a few seconds). The pin set has only one possible position for the shilling/token win. Finishing on this one position results in a twelve coin payout. A separate cam unit in the machine determines whether or not the token is paid instead of twelve coins. This cam unit runs continuously until the stop button is pressed, so everything has to fall right for the token payout. On most occasions when playing my machine, it's the twelve coins that are paid, but the token has come up once. The idea is quite clever.

So let's play Rondo. I inserted a penny and pressed the button just before the shilling win. The arrow slid off the shilling position and onto lose. The next coin in, I pressed the button to stop on the shilling and the arrow slid past the shilling, but it also slid past lose, 3d, lose and finished on the right-hand side red 6d. On the next play, when the button was pressed the arrow braked suddenly and did an emergency stop on the lose position just before the shilling win. This showed me that Rondo's payouts are random and it is all down to luck, with no skill at all. A bit of a disappointment really. This reminded me of Electrodart – but hang on, wasn't Electrodart also made by Jamiesons Automatics?

Despite what I know, the game play on Rondo can become very addictive, even though you know there is no skill whatsoever. However, I think I may have missed the chance of making extra spending money on Rondo back in the 1960s. The selector turns very slowly and you can clearly hear every click, so once you've landed on the shilling win, you simply count the clicks and on click 56 the top prize has come round again. If only I had known this back then, I am sure I would have had the key man puzzled as to how it was being done! Although, possibly the usual atmospheric noise in a busy arcade would have made each click less audible. I will never know.

I have made a video about my Rondo for you all to view. Go onto Youtube and search *Rondo Penny Arcade Machine* and you will see what I have been getting so excited about.

What will I have bought next time? Make sure you keep up your subscription to MMM, and you'll find out next month. Bye for now.

Robert Rowland

The Road to no Return

Part II

By Angie Dobney

Trevor and I don't do things by halves, so as I said, we bought the house that needed restoring; but at the same time Trevor bought a 1957 Escort, from Conssett in the Pennines (yes, you guessed it, we went there from Essex in a day to get that one)! He did the car and the house up in nine months whilst I was expecting Michael, our son. Superman, eh? I did help a bit! Just in case we were bored, we also each had day jobs and ran a DJ business, where we were out entertaining parties and weddings. Hey, come on, we don't like watching television!

Anyway, whilst we were getting our collection together, we noticed the local police were advertising to security mark valuable items. You could just pop down to a Portacabin they had set up on the main road, and all would be done in a matter of minutes. They hadn't met us! As we could hardly cart all our collection down to them, bearing in mind we had jukeboxes, pinballs, pussy shooter, steer-a-ball, allwins and bandits, we cheekily enquired if they could come to us. That was our first mistake, as after the first policeman came and was with us for hours, he then brought his mate back the next day. It wasn't that the job was too involved – we just couldn't get them off the machines to do any marking. Trevor even ended up driving them back to the station so they weren't late for their shift. They eventually gave us a couple of pens to do the marking ourselves.

I'm sure the collectors amongst you have found the same thing, that people are generally really fascinated by the machines. When we were having carpets fitted in the house, it took ages because the carpet fitter wanted to keep putting songs on the jukebox or play on the machines. Such is their magic; funny in this day and age of X Boxes, PS3s and computers. As Michael grew up, his young friends wanted to play on the machines, and not on his other toys. It does say something about simple pleasures.

We seemed to be getting quite well known in Southend for our machines, and were approached by the Southend Pier Museum to do an exhibition for them. This we did, and they still have some of our machines on display, which is quite handy, as it's somewhere else to keep them. One is a rather nice Ruffler and Walker Tower Bridge. Because of our connections with various car clubs, we have given a few talks on the history of the machines at the Enfield Museum of Power, and they too have our Hawtins and Carousel allwins on display.

Trevor and I did try to get a unit on Southend pier. We wanted to have some machines, jukeboxes and pinballs in it and run it like a sixties milk bar. We also wanted to possibly arrange times when local school children could come and visit and

learn something of the past. The pier museum curators were all in favour, because we could have advertised their venue too. However, the local council was not so helpful. Trevor and I took time off work to attend a meeting, but were met with so many silly excuses, like "We do have a unit, but can't show it to you until there is a right tide." Apparently, it was either in too much or out too far. What that had to do with a unit on top of the pier was beyond us, so we eventually gave up. Mind you, it was probably a wise decision, as on a recent visit to the pier, that part of it has yet again been devastated by fire. Southend pier has a notorious history of fires over the years, luckily the pier museum does not get affected, being situated at the shore entrance.

We still had this feeling bugging us of wanting to do something more with the machines, so following a visit to a classic car show in Lowestoft, we thought "what if we bought a guest house and themed it with the machines and memorabilia from the sixties." This could possibly work, as I wanted a job that would fit in with Michael's schooling and Trevor could help but still do his job as a cab driver.

It sounded great in theory, but in practice it was easier said than done. For a start, trying to convince the bank we were a viable proposition was one hurdle, and then finding a suitable place was another. Unfortunately, what a property looks like and what it's like in reality are too different things. However, after some months everything fell into place and we found what we were looking for in Great Yarmouth. 'Scary but exciting' I think was what we felt. Our friends thought we were mad, but we knew we wouldn't be happy until we gave it a shot.

Finding a removal company proved to be more difficult than we thought. It wasn't the quantity we had to move, but more the content. We had three removal companies come to give us a quote. The first two laughed nervously and beat a hasty retreat. The third guy ran a small family business and was more than happy to move our machines. He said his guys would think it less boring than the normal removals. So we were all set; what were we letting ourselves in for?.....

Final part next month.

Angie Dobney

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Complete ball lift mech. and correct coin slide assembly for Rokola Worlds' Fair Jigsaw Pinball. Alternatively, if anyone could let me have a look at one or supply a sketch or photos I would be grateful.

Alan 01582 536356
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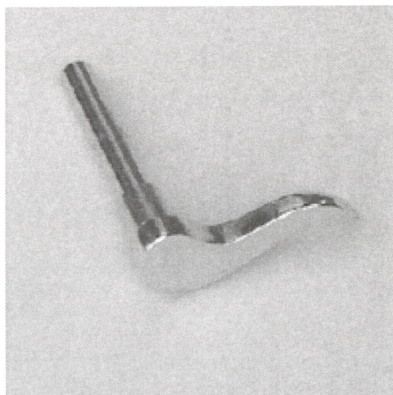
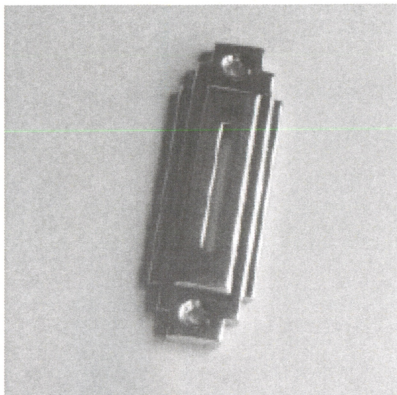
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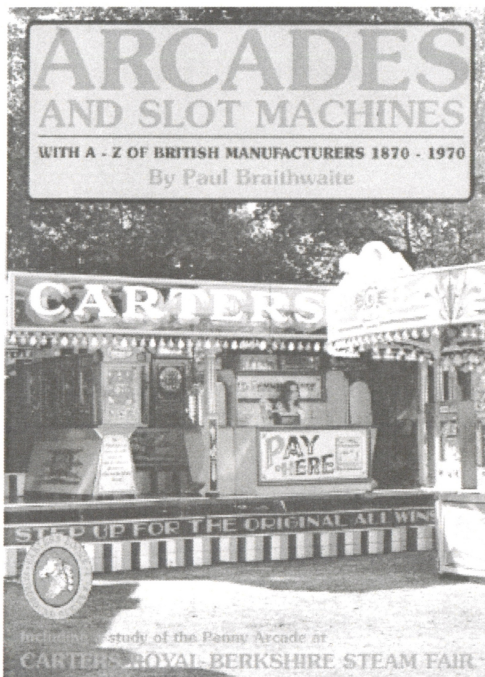
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